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## WORLD 3 Nigerian internet fraudsters get 235-year imprisonment in US

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(L-R): Rasaq Raheem, Oladimeji Seun Ayelotan, Femi Alexander Mewase

**Three Nigerian internet fraudsters who befriended many of their victims on dating sites have been handed down huge sentences by a Mississippi court**

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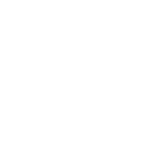
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Oladimeji Seun Ayelotan, 30, was sentenced to 95 years in prison; Rasaq Aderoju Raheem, 31, was given 115 years and Femi Alexander Mewase, 45, got 25 years behind bars.

A court in the Southern District of Mississippi found them all guilty of crimes including mail fraud, wire fraud, identity theft, credit card fraud and theft of government property. Ayelotan and Raheem were also found guilty of conspiracies to commit bank fraud and money laundering.

Dating back to at least 2001, the scammers were involved in multiple internet fraud schemes, resulting in losses in the tens of millions, according to the Department of Justice.

It claimed that they would befriend women on dating sites, establish a romantic relationship and then either get them to send money or have them participate in fraud schemes, usually without the victim's knowledge.

The unsuspecting women would sometimes be required to cash counterfeit checks and money orders; use stolen credit card details to purchase goods; and

They were also apparently used to launder money via Western Union and MoneyGram, and re-package and re-ship goods obtained fraudulently.

A whopping 21 defendants have already been charged in this ongoing case, 12 of whom have pleaded guilty to charges involving conspiracy and 11 of whom have been sentenced.

Global fraud continues to grow thanks to the internet and an increase in the use of both anonymizing technology and bots designed to mimic human behavior.

ThreatMetrix, which analyzes 20 billion annual transactions, blocked 130 million fraud attempts in Q1 alone, a 35% increase on the same time last year.

However, it is Europe that has become a major fraud hotspot. There were 50% more fraud attempts originating from the region than the US in the quarter, the firm claimed.

**Source: African Examiner**

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